

SARAH MCCLENDON'S WASHINGTON REPORT
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1. Well, here we go again, to war with 30,000 troops committed by others than the Constitutioned authorities. And they are saying that President Bush would not commit them if he thought any of them were going to be killed. Some of them certainly will. This time it is to get U.S. donated food through the guerrilla lines to feed the starving people of Somalia whom we see dying every day on television.

Of course we do not want to see those people die. Of course, we want to do something about it. But how did this happen? No one seems to give any answers. Few even ask for answers.

If we go to Somalia, we might in no time at all be guarding food for the people of Bosnia and other nations of south central Europe who are engaged in a bloody war. There is even some indication that the Soviets might get into this war too. Remember it is this area where World War I started and like other wars, I do not believe any one has ever given us a real answer, yet.

Recently, I was asked to contribute some thought in words to the VietNam Memorial's anniversary. The thought was well received by a mixed audience of Viet Name veterans, men and women. I hope it is read more in future: "Americans may never find out exactly why they were called to fight the VietNam war....As the people learn more about how they were manipulated, both the opponents and the supporters, it is hoped that they will ask questions before they submit to the slaughter of war. Americans are ready at all times to defend their country. However, they are learning more and more about how secret diplomacy can involve them in needless wars as in the past. Let us hope that Americans do not ever face such manipulations behind the scenes of powerful persons who glorify their misguided purpose as a holy war."

The first news of this new bloodbath for the U.S., came in a commitment by Acting Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger that 30,000 would go. I looked in vain in the same story for any quote from a Department of Defense official. There was none. Nor was there a word said about Congress which under the Constitution has the authority to involve the U.S. in a war. They have been getting around this in recent years by simply putting the U.S. troops into the dying and not declaring it to be a war.

During the first week of December, most of the House of Representatives will be in Washington where they could be

consulted, could express their will and could form the basis for calling all the others back to a decision before putting 30,000 troops overseas.

It may be that the U.S. is responsible for this fighting in Somalia, in Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia. Where did the weapons come from? We helped start civil wars (ethnic cleansing) to overthrow governments. The U.S. must realize that it has been selling arms around the world through contracts let by the Central Intelligence Agency. The profits from war do not always get back to the U.S. Treasury. Often they go into the Swiss bank accounts of retired generals and admirals and professional arms sellers. Oh, of course, the manufacture of the arms in this country gives employment. But so can other purposes of manufacture. There must be something good that the U.S. can manufacture other than that. When Third World nations buy our arms, they do not spend their budgets on food for their wives and children. Then comes famine. Then comes U.S. givers to provide the money and food, to care for millions. Then comes U.S. troops to guard the food.

We are just now learning that in the Persian Gulf war due to mistakes that we killed 35 of our own soldiers out of the 148 U.S. troops killed in action, and wounded 72 of the 467 wounded. We shot up 27 of our own ground vehicles out of the 35 lost in the entire war, so Patricia Axelrod reported in an article for Penthouse magazine in November. She interviewed military officers to get information which the Pentagon has tried to repress. After the U.S. allies gave \$54.5 billion, the U.S. pledged \$42 billion. However the Government Accounting Office said the true cost could be "over \$120 billion." That meant this country still had to pay \$72 billion. This does not cover the costs of treating wounded veterans from this war for years to come. Axelrod found that there was a great malfunction and deficiency in the Patriot missile, designed to shoot down the Scud missile which was launched with U.S. financed launchers put together in Connecticut and shipped to Saddam Hussein in Iraq before the Persian Gulf Desert Storm was started. Axelrod, a researcher on weapons for a Washington Project, "Hero," found that sometimes the person shooting a weapon could not see the target although knowing how far the weapons would shoot. Bush, according to Axelrod, asked Congress to give \$42 billion for the upgrading of the Patriot missile which sometimes endangered the people on the ground in falling. According to an El Paso machinist who had to repair the Patriot missile sometimes the motors would overheat and burn up.

Axelrod found that other weapons highly rated as bills were presented to taxpayers for their excellence in performance do not measure up.

2. Critical period for obtaining the CHANGE which the people voted for occurs in the next two weeks as new congressmen from both political parties, male and female, seek to overturn the resistance of the old leadership in House and Senate to change operating rules.

The new freshmen Republicans held a praiseworthy meeting in Des Moines, Iowa. They had invited the Democratic freshmen to attend, also, but none of them were allowed to do so by their leaders. Those same leaders may get an eyeopener during the coming weeks when they confront their own party freshmen. They will want action, too to change the committee system and the obsolete rules which gives power to arbitrary leaders instead of the majority of members.

The Republicans want the number of sub-committees lessened. The number of committees, too, could be cut, they think. The large number of meetings scheduled daily mean that no congress- man can give his full attention to all of these, so some legislative approval gets by in committees which may mean more spending and less representative action. A person cannot go to two meetings occurring at the same time. Already there is wide evidence that the leaders of House and Senate are prepared to say no to requests for change from the new men and women.

3. Here are some developments to watch for: The Bush administration, according to Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan, will not prepare a budget to saddle upon the incoming Clinton era. This will save time of officials and public, much paper, many words, and anger. Chances are that the Bush budget would not be accepted anyway.

In Agriculture, however, there is a new assessment being taken of every county office where farmers' advice is given and all structure of Soil Conservation offices, Farmers Home administration, rural programs, and benefits to see if these are worth keeping. This will be done by counties and by states. Many of these offices are definitely worth keeping.

One of these programs is the best thing we have seen in government in a long time. It was approved by Congress. It permits home demonstration agents in various counties who operate under a federal-local matching program to teach wise and practical living to young military families, to urban groups that request this and to families now living in public housing. Qualified teachers tell them how to be good parents, what to expect from children, how to balance a check book and keep up with expenses, how it pays to keep up family communications inside the circle and how to meet simple emergencies.

There must be changes in the way cities are allowed by state and federal government to provide programs for redress of children who are loose on the neighborhoods after school hours. It was also cited that the famous effective Head Start program for every young children ends at seven years. Then there is no program. Another need is that women and men rearing families in shelters or public housing units need contact with wise counsellors to teach them how to deal with children and daily living. It has been learned that pimps are going into these public housing centers and taking

advantage of the stress of women to urge them to turn to prostitution to get help for their children.

4. Big News: the White House and the Office of Management and Budget admit that the nation has lost billions of dollars by sloppy contracting out to private sources much of the goods and services for federal offices. A lot of this occurs in the Department of Energy and in the Environmental Protective agency. But what about the arrangement whereby private citizens are issued contracts by the Central Intelligence Agency to sell arms overseas to countries that have dictators who use these arms to start wars.

The House Task Force on October Surprise (the deal to hold American hostages in Iran until after the November, 1980 election to keep President Carter from getting credit for deliverance of the 52 Americans) is expected to report by Jan. 1. It is doubtful if it will shed any guilt on the Reagan-Bush campaign officials. The chief of that group, William Casey seems to be an easy target for blame these days. He is dead. President Bush continues to deny that he went to Paris to conclude the deal. The pilot who claims he flew Bush there, Gunther Russbacher, remains on a trumped charge in Missouri state prison. The pilot worked for the CIA and is a top Naval Intelligence officer. He cites that fact the Secret Service logs on Bush's activities claimed to be in Washington were written some time after the fact. They show that Bush was in three different places in Washington. The time and date indicate certainly there were conflicts in Secret Service proof.

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